MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Plans
Deputy Director for Science and Technology
Deputy Director for Support

SUBJECT   : List of Key Documents for Agency Annual Report

REFERENCE   : a. Memorandum from Executive Director-Comptroller
to Deputy Directors dated 26 May 1972, "Information
Control - Archives, History and Records."
b. Memorandum from Executive Director-Comptroller
to Deputy Directors dated 3 July 1972. "Agency
Annual Report"

1. This memorandum provides supplemental guidance as to what
kinds of documents and files are to be listed in each components'
submission.

2. Selection of which specific documents are "key" and which
are of archival quality is a very subjective judgement which can
only be made by the component. Detailed instructions concerning the
content of each component's contribution are contained in the references
cited above. Offices should pay particular attention to paragraphs 5 and 6
of reference b. The Agency Annual Report is the new focal point for the
agency's historical program. History should emphasize development -
how things were at the beginning, how they changed, and how they ended -
not simply list the highlights of the component's activities, nor only its
results. It is intended that each component's "key documents and files"
shall be those which support and substantiate its narrative contribution.

3. The component's list of its key documents and files will be used
to discern what is significant from what is routine in order to facilitate
the study of the agency's past performance and to enable this agency to
rapidly identify, locate, and examine those documents and files which

best reveal its plans, policies, and participation in particular events
at particular times. Self-examination is necessary if the agency is to
improve its performance. There is growing interest in the agency's
activities and role in formulating national policy, and there is a
growing commitment on the part of those who govern to make information
available to those who ask for it as soon as it can reasonably be released.
Rapid reference to significant records will ensure timely response to
inquiries, thus protecting the agency's interests and the national security.

4. The criteria for inclusion in agency archives is that documents
must be "of sufficient historical or other value to warrant their continual
preservation by the United States Government". While there is a danger
of overlooking significant facts or trends when one is too close to the
event, the decision on what to retain for tomorrow must be made today.
It is not unreasonable to believe that what is important today will be
of historical significance tomorrow. Look for overviews, synopses,
summaries, and highest level policy papers rather than detailed office
working records, but be alert to preserve all the important original
source materials for future researchers. The safest way is to hold on to
more, subject to later review. More specific positive guidance is difficult
to provide in a general paper. Prophecy is the essence of archival
evaluation. Components must judge for themselves which of their documents
and files are significant and of enduring value. Archives aren't intended
to be exclusively for historical use. Each component's experience should
be a guide to which of their records are required sufficiently often to
merit permanent retention.

5. An analysis of those lists thus far submitted in response to reference b. makes it possible to describe in some detail that which is not desired:

a. Lists of each component's published finished intelligence or other product bibliographies are not desired. These items are included in agency archives at the time they are published.

b. Lists of personnel changes, organization charts, and announcements of appointments to important positions are not desired if this information is regularly included in agency archives by the Office of Personnel.

c. Comprehensive lists of all those documents and files which are required to be retained permanently at the records center for legal, audit, or other reasons are not desired. This information is already available to agency archives from each component's Records Control Schedule, Form 139.

d. Routine unsummarized raw data such as daily or weekly reports are not desired. These probably have been summarized in more comprehensive reports. Too much detail obscures what is significant.

e. Most of the component lists thus far have been too short or too cryptic and the key documents too summary to be useful, Component's lists should include approximately 15-20 documents or one full page.

f. Key documents should pertain to the component listing them and to the current time period with which the report is concerned.

6. For more specific guidance, questions not answered above

should be referred to the historical Staff, extension ☐   STATINTL

FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

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Special Assistant to the
Executive Director
Comptroller for Information Control